

**OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION  
OF THE SUPREME COURT OF IOWA**



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Memorandum for: Publication

From: Paul H. Wieck II, Director

Subject: Amendment of Student Practice Rule

Date: March 21, 2014

**Overview**

The amendment of Iowa's student practice rule is based on a proposal filed with the supreme court by the director of Iowa Legal Aid and the director of the office of professional regulation. The general purpose of the amendment is to help provide legal services to low-income Iowans by expanding and clarifying the circumstances under which law students and law graduates awaiting the bar examination or examination results may engage in limited, supervised practice.

**Iowa Court Rule 31.15(1)**

Iowa Court Rule 31.15(1)(c) is amended to include transactional matters as well as matters pending in court.

**Iowa Court Rule 31.15 (2)**

A sentence is added to Iowa Court Rule 31.15(2) to make clear that law students who have completed at least three semesters may represent clients in an administrative contested case proceeding, but need not have a licensed attorney present. The new sentence makes rule 31.15(2) consistent with rule 31.15(1)(c), which allows representation in court without a licensed attorney present.

**Iowa Court Rule 31.15(3)**

Iowa Court Rule 31.15(3) is amended to allow students to continue the same level of student practice after a law school clinical program or other educational program is completed, so long as the placement is substantially the same and the law school approves. This amendment allows law students to continue to use and improve the skills developed in a law school class after the class is completed.

**Iowa Court Rule 31.15(4)**

A new Iowa Court Rule 31.15(4) is added to make clear that law students may perform the same type of work for licensed lawyers that other non-lawyers, such as paralegals, are able to perform. The former Iowa Court Rule 31.15(4) is renumbered as Iowa Court Rule 31.15(5).

**Iowa Court Rule 31.15(6)**

Iowa Court Rule 31.15(6) is added to address permissible activity by law school graduates between the time of graduation and admission to the bar. In the switch to the multi-state bar exam, a window has opened when graduates cannot practice but could obtain practical experience before beginning employment as a lawyer. This amendment permits practice on behalf of specific governmental and approved legal aid organizations during this time, under the supervision of a licensed lawyer.